

that of their brethren in the great towns. The Jews, too, numerous in such cities as Palermo, where there were fifteen hundred at the end of the century, though generally judged by their own laws, were treated as serfs who might be disposed of with the land upon which they dwelt.

Such were the elements of the kingdom, and such the classes that dwelt under the shadow of the Crown. Not averse but rather favourable to local liberty and the retention of local law and customs, the royal power was all-embracing and all-penetrating, as it were the corner-stone, the pillars, and the roof of the national structure. That which gave to the monarchy its strength and provided it with the means to carry out its designs was however found in a highly organised and scientific financial system.

The great revenues of the Crown of Sicily came from numerous sources. As the source of justice, the King received the profits of the royal courts, which came in a thin but constant stream; pleaders winning their cases paid a third to the Treasury; fees were paid when officials or judges fixed land limits, issued grants, or re-issued charters, Estate and chattels of the intestate or the convicted came

to the Fiscus. As supreme landlord,
the Crown
took from its vassals, lay and clerical,
reliefs and
aids and escheating or forfeited land.
A *collecta*
or aid fell on the feudal tenants, who
owed also
military and naval service. Over the
numerous
royal domains the King was in the
position of any